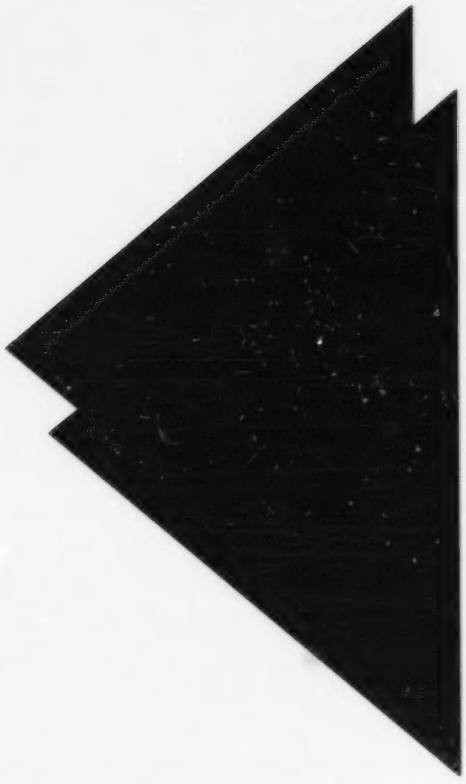
Examples and Outcomes of

Healthy Public Policy



Health Our Choice For Life

B.C. Ministry of Health
Office of Health Promotion
in collaboration with
Social Planning and
Research Council of B.C.
(SPARC)
1991

EXAMPLES AND OUTCOMES OF HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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In collaboration with
SOCIAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH COUNCIL OF B.C. (SPARC)

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The material for this document was prepared by Julia McMahon.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago, if we had asked you to name a healthy public policy, likely you would have mentioned Medicare or the isolation of people with tuberculosis. Now our understanding of what is needed for health is broader

Safe highways, smoke-free spaces, clean air, and safe waste disposal all contribute to our health. Increasingly, we rely on legislators, planners, community activists, and ourselves to develop public policies that promote health.

Great changes have taken place over the last 20 years. In 1971, we were just beginning to think that non-smokers should be able to choose a non-smoking seat on an airplane. Now, providing smoke-free air on planes, buses, and most public buildings is no longer a choice, it's the law--a law which embodies a healthy public policy.

Twenty years ago, we didn't wear seat belts, and we didn't worry about driving after a couple of drinks. Now, for the vast majority, buckling up is an automatic habit, one that is supported by legislation. Most of us think twice about how much we drink if we have to drive home. We've changed how we think, and that change has come from community action, from education programs, and from legislation.

The term "public policy" usually refers to decisions made by governments and the methods used by governments to achieve their policy goals. These days, however, we recognize that the activities of the private sector can have broad public impact. In this paper, we will discuss how the public policies of all three levels of government, the private sector, and the actions of communities can contribute to healthy public policy.

This paper describes examples of how public policies have been created or changed to promote health. The examples range from specific public policies such as taxing cigarettes to discourage smoking, to broad, general public policies such as establishing a strategy for a "healthy municipality" in Saanich.

The examples show that thinking about policy in terms of health is a natural and obvious way to improve our lives. Very often "healthy public policy" is simply a matter of common sense.

Australia: The Victoria Health Promotion Foundation

TAXING TOBACCO TO PAY FOR HEALTH PROMOTION

The Issue

It is generally accepted that smoking causes health problems. Since governments gain revenue from tobacco taxes, some people argue that a portion of those taxes should be dedicated to encouraging people to quit smoking.

The Policy: Dedicated Taxes

In Several Australian states, tobacco taxes are used to support health promotion programs. The State of Victoria, for example, created a special organization that supports health promotion programs and health research, and sponsors the arts and sports events.

This organization, the Victoria Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), is funded through tobacco taxes. Five percent of the State's taxes on tobacco (approximately $24 million per year) are dedicated to VicHealth.

Taking Over Corporate Support of Sports and The Arts

When corporations sponsor sports and arts events, both the corporation and the sports or arts organizations benefit. In exchange for their financial investment in the organization, the sponsor receives an enhanced community image, access to the target market, increased product awareness, and credibility. VicHealth buys out tobacco company sponsorship in the arts and in sports and assumes the sponsoring role. As a result, arts and sports events are now associated with health promotion messages instead of tobacco company messages.

The Results

VicHealth funds QUIT, a smoking and health program conducted by the Anti-Cancer Council. QUIT challenges the view that smoking is a symbol of social and sexual success. Through VicHealth's sponsorships, QUIT reaches two of its main targets--young women

(through its sponsorship of the Victorian Netball Association and the National Tennis Association) and blue collar men (through sponsorship of snooker, football, and rugby associations).

VicHealth also funds major community development efforts such as the Healthy Localities Program, the Australian counterpart of the Healthy Communities Program in British Columbia.

A Comprehensive Effort

Rhonda Galbally, Executive Director of VicHealth notes that although VicHealth receives a relatively small proportion of tobacco taxes, those revenues are sufficient to sustain a comprehensive health promotion effort.

Other Examples

The Australian States of Western and Southern Australia also dedicate tobacco taxes. Dedicated tobacco taxes also exist in Mauritius. New Zealand, Sweden, Chile, and California are considering implementing a dedicated tobacco tax.

For More Information

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Canada: Environmental Partnership Fund

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Issue

Canadians along with people from all countries are increasingly worried about the environment. Environmental groups have gained credibility and visibility in recent years, reflecting the public's concern. As a result, doing something about the environment is now on the national agenda.

Support For Environmental Programs

Canadians continue to express their concern for a healthier environment through polling, write-in campaigns and lobbying by both individuals and organizations. Many people want to become actively involved in prevention and clean-up programs. Many others want to help but do not know what they can do.

The Policy

In response to public concern, the Department of the Environment announced the Environmental Partners Fund in 1989. The Fund provides financial support to voluntary non-profit groups up to a maximum of $200,000. The sponsoring group must provide matching resources and is encouraged to find partners. Partners can include municipal or provincial governments, voluntary and service clubs, as well as the private sector. Matched funding and an emphasis on local partners ensure that a community is committed to the project.

The private sector has been the largest source of matching resources for projects supported by the Fund. Companies as varied as provincial hydro companies and local hardware stores have donated everything from dollars to shovels to help in a clean-up of the environment.

The Results

The Fund has a budget of $50 million over five years and was recently extended to 1996 under the federal government's new environmental policy, The Green Plan. Its mandate now covers advocacy and awareness work as well as the composting, recycling, and environmental restoration and enhancement programs normally supported by the Fund. To date, the Fund has invested $14 million in projects worth $70 million. Projects range in size from small local projects to large nationally-based ones. Some British Columbia examples include:

Project Examples

- ☐ The Hornby Island Recycling Centre has started a community compost program.
- ☐ The Vancouver Natural History Society and the Greater Vancouver Regional District are restoring the oldest sphagnum (peat moss) bog in the Lower Mainland.
- ☐ The Port Alice Fish and Wildlife Association and Western Forest Products Ltd. are improving coho salmon and steelhead trout habitats on northern Vancouver Island.
- ☐ The Robson Valley Recycling Group, in partnership with the communities of McBride, Valemount, Dunster, Tete Jaune, and the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Highways, is operating recycling depots in each community.

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Environmental Partners Fund
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1200 West 73rd Street
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Telephone: (604) 664-9088

Canada: Tobacco Taxation and the Tobacco Products Act

GETTING TOUGH ON TOBACCO

The Issue

Smoking is a leading cause of death among Canadians. Cigarette smoke can also be hazardous to non-smokers. While the shift in public opinion supporting non-smoking has been evident since about 1980, stronger measures have recently been implemented in order to protect non-smokers from smoke, to encourage smokers to quit, and to encourage non-smokers to remain smoke-free.

The Policies

Two federal government policies have had an impact on smokers and on tobacco companies. These are tobacco taxation and tobacco advertising controls.

Taxation

Taxes on tobacco have increased with every federal budget since the late 1980s. For example, recent increases in tobacco taxes added 86¢ to a pack of cigarettes in B.C. Smokers now pay close to $5.00 for a pack of 20 cigarettes.

Research that connects tobacco to disease, along with expressed public opinion against smoking, has encouraged legislators to tax tobacco extensively. There is some evidence that high tobacco prices encourage people to stop smoking.

Advertising Controls

While taxation targets the consumer, the 1989 **Tobacco Products Control Act** targets tobacco advertising and its association with the "good life." The Act phases out advertising and places increased restrictions on the promotion of cigarettes and tobacco. All trademark advertising is to end as of January 1993. While the Act is being appealed in the courts by the tobacco companies, the Act's restrictions remain in force until the appeal procedure is completed.

Critical Factors For Success

The combined approach of increased taxation and tougher legislation appears to be working. The majority of Canadians do not smoke and do not wish to be near smoke. The strength of public support for tough measures against smoking puts pressure on legislators to keep legislation against tobacco use tough and current.

The Lobby

Non-smokers rights groups constantly lobby for tougher laws at every level of government. A national coalition, composed of several nurses', physicians', and non-profit groups is continually working to address all aspects of tobacco restriction and prevention.

The Results

Is it working? Between 1980 and 1989, cigarette tobacco consumption declined almost 30% among Canadians. The trend has continued with an 8% decline in 1989 and a decline in tobacco consumption of 5% in 1990. The major tax hikes in 1991 are predicted to provoke a further decrease of 12%. According to the Non-smokers Rights Association, Canadian consumption is falling more rapidly than in any other developed country.

For More Information:

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Canada: Impaired Driving Legislation
USING DETERRENCE TO CREATE CHANGE

The Issue

Canadians are concerned about deaths caused by alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents.

The Policy: Stiffer Penalties

In 1985, a new federal law placed impaired driving in the criminal code and imposed stiff penalties on offenders. Previously, impaired driving had been considered a lesser offence and was dealt with under provincial laws. Now, convicted offenders carry a criminal record.

Public Support

National surveys on drinking and driving indicated that 75% of Canadians supported tougher enforcement of impaired driving laws. As well, citizen groups, advocating stronger laws, had sprung up across the country. Groups like Citizens Against Impaired Driving, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Drunk Driving, and People to Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere, organized actively against "the carnage on the roads."

The Need For Education

While the public supported tougher penalties, polling indicated a contrary trend--drinking and driving was still socially acceptable. In response, the federal and provincial governments launched education and awareness campaigns to reinforce the legislation and to reduce the acceptability of impaired driving. A positive, social climate would make it easier for drivers and passengers to avoid drinking and driving. The tougher laws make it harder on those who are caught.

The Results

Between 1982 and 1990, there was more than a 30% decline in the proportion of accidents where alcohol was a major contributing factor. The Counter Attack program recognizes that the situation has improved but still does not believe that acceptable levels have been achieved. Thus, Counter Attack continues to warn drivers that it is criminal to drink and drive. The hospitality industry also takes responsibility for discouraging drinking drivers by training servers and offering designated driver programs. Local communities provide a number of services that make it easier for people to make a healthy choice and avoid driving while impaired.

For More Information:

Counter Attack
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B.C.: The Agricultural Land Reserve

PRESERVING LAND FOR FOOD PRODUCTION

The Issue

Over 50% of the food consumed in B.C. is imported. Only 5% of the province's land is suitable for agriculture. This same land is often considered prime land for housing, shopping malls, highways, and factories.

The Policy

The Agricultural Land Reserve protects land for agriculture in British Columbia. The Agricultural Land Commission was established as an independent provincial agency in 1973. The Commission identifies and protects the province's agricultural land base and assists with land use management.

How It Works

An area is designated under the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) if it has potential for agriculture, even if it is not currently used for agriculture. Because saving land alone is not enough to preserve agriculture, other farm policies such as farm income insurance, agricultural land development, and loan assistance have been established.

The Initial Response: Opposition

The establishment of the ALR in 1972 and 1973 was controversial and hotly contested. Much of the opposition was generated by development interests and the real estate sector. Describing the program as a control that destroyed land investment and farmers' retirement potential, opponents to the ALR responded with marches, newspaper advertisements, and even appeals to the Queen.

An early Chairman of the Agricultural Land Commission commented that one reason for the wide opposition to the ALR was a lack of technical expertise (lawyers, planners and other professionals) in the province to explain the intent and implementation of the new legislation.

Gradual Acceptance

Ten years later, the acceptance of the ALR has greatly improved. One key to the growing acceptance of the Reserve was that the Commission now designates land to be included (or excluded) in the Reserve only after extensive consultation with regional districts. This collaborative process has contributed greatly to support for the program.

An Environmentally Sound Policy

The program is now viewed by most British Columbians as a positive one. On a technical level, the Commission has maintained constructive and objective working relations with municipalities and regional districts.

The Results

Approximately 4.7 million hectares of land have been placed in the Reserve, which is just under 5% of the province's land mass. The concept of agricultural land preservation is now firmly established as a healthy public policy that supports the environment.

For More Information:

B.C. Agricultural Land
Commission
133-4940 Canada Way
Burnaby, B.C.
V5G 4K6

Telephone: (604) 660-7000

B.C.: Mandatory Seat Belt legislation

BUCKLING UP THE BELTS

The Issue

In the early 1970s, only 35% of British Columbians voluntarily buckled up when they got into a car. At that time, it was well known that seat belt use reduced injury and death in motor vehicle accidents.

The Policy: Making Seat Belt Use Mandatory

In 1977, the British Columbia government passed legislation making it mandatory to use seat belts in motor vehicles.

Getting Used To The Idea

Two years prior to the legislation, the B.C. Motor Vehicle Department launched an advertising campaign aimed at convincing British Columbians that seat belt use would save lives. The province recognized that it would take time for people to make buckling up an automatic habit. The 1977 legislation was not enforced for one month after it came into law in an effort to encourage compliance without enforcement.

The Result: Seat Belt Use Doubles

By the end of 1977, seat belt usage had doubled. More then 70% of British Columbians said they regularly buckled up.

Over the next two years, seat belt usage declined to about 55%. Analysts predicted that compliance would remain at 55% if the legislation was not strictly enforced. The analysts felt that strong enforcement could result in a 70% usage rate.

Strict enforcement and ongoing educational campaigns have greatly improved seat belt usage rates over the years. In 1990, 94% of British Columbians said they regularly use seat belts.

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V8T 5A3

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Healthy Saanich 2000
BUYING INTO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The Issue

People are encouraged to stay healthy if their communities are healthy places to live. The Municipality of Saanich recognized the need for a broad planning strategy to create a "healthy community."

The Policy

In 1988, the Saanich Council passed a resolution to make Saanich a "healthy community." The Chief Planner for Saanich noted that a "healthy community" approach offers a set of guiding principals for planning. Since health is the basis of planning, considering the health aspect of policies means fine tuning policies rather than radical change. "After all, the job of municipal government is to provide safe streets, libraries, adequate housing, and so on. These all add up to a safe and healthy neighbourhood."

The Council established committees to upgrade Municipal Hall to make it accessible to the disabled, improve coordination of volunteer services, develop more recreational activities for teens, and to survey children about how to make Saanich a more liveable place.

Some of the more far-reaching effects of Healthy Saanich 2000 are those that affect the municipality's internal policies.

A Policy Review

As a first step, the Co-Chairs of the Healthy Community Committee asked municipal department heads to review policy manuals and come back with report cards about whether administrative practices produced healthy results. This process has resulted in an environmental checklist for the planning department. It has also led to a new municipal purchasing policy that emphasizes buying safe and recycled or recyclable products.

A Purchasing Policy

Saanich has now switched oil suppliers to a company that provides re-refined oil. The Municipality is also considering a long-term switch to either propane or natural gas. In considering tenders for building demolitions, preference will be given to contractors who recycle material, as long as their price quote is not exceptionally high. "We expect to pay more for these products, because we are trying not to fill up the landfill," notes Brian Stead, Head of Purchasing.

The Municipality has found that choosing environmentally safe products is not always straightforward. Stead has found that finding new products requires experimentation and follow-through to ensure that in the long run, they are safer and healthier than regular products and that they do not put increased pressure on the landfill.

Formalizing the Policy With Council

Although the Purchasing Department has been buying environmentally safe products for over a year, the Municipal Council will soon vote on new objectives to formalize the purchasing policy. These objectives are

- ☐ to develop sources of supply for environmentally safe products wherever possible and practical and/or supplied by local companies;
- ☐ to purchase whenever financially practical recycled and re-refined products that meet or better purchasing standards.

The Saanich experience shows that buying environmentally sound products requires both attention and follow-through, but that it is worth the effort in terms of controlling the costs of long-term waste management.

For More Information:

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Alkali Lake
STEP BY STEP

The Issue

The native people of the Alkali Lake Reserve remember that alcohol was introduced to them about 1940 by a store owner who used it to pay for their furs. By 1970, 100% of the adult population of Alkali Lake was alcoholic. Children as young as eight years of age were also regular users of alcohol.

The Policy: A Commitment To Sobriety

Over a period of several years the Alkali Lake Band transformed itself from a community immersed in alcohol to one that is 95% alcohol free. During that transition, several policy decisions by the Chief and the Council were key in establishing and maintaining sobriety in this community.

The First Turning Point

The first move came from a mother, Phyllis Chelsea, who made the decision to become sober when her young daughter refused to come home because of her parents' use of alcohol. Shortly thereafter, her husband, Andy, also quit. They, along with an Oblate monk, Brother Ed, were the only three sober people on the reserve.

The Second Turning Point

By 1974, only two other people had joined Phyllis and Andy Chelsea in sobriety. Significantly, Andy had been elected Chief of the Band and thus was able to effect policy changes that supported sobriety.

Eliminate Supply and Reduce Demand

As Chief, Andy made structural changes in the way the Band ran its affairs. These changes effectively removed alcohol from the Reserve.

First, Andy prohibited the van that made regular alcohol deliveries from coming on the reserve. Second, he enlisted the RCMP's support to stop bootlegging on

the reserve. Third, the Band instituted a voucher system for Band members on social security. Social security payments were made in the form of vouchers and these, not cash, were used to purchase goods and services from local merchants.

When Phyllis Chelsea and a friend opened a store on the reserve, they drove out the previous store owner who was alcoholic and had a history of treating band members unfairly.

Controlling Professionals

The Band also changed its relations with professionals on the Reserve. The priest on the Reserve, who was an alcoholic, was asked to leave. In time, the Band Council took over responsibility for hiring teachers from the Department of Indian Affairs.

The Band Council encouraged people to go to treatment for their alcoholism. As a gesture of support, Council made a practice of remodelling members' homes while they were away at treatment centres.

Building Strength Through Culture

The Band also made a commitment to re-incorporate native culture into community life. Council invited a medicine man, Albert Lightning, to teach the Band the "old ways." These were incorporated into the Band's celebrations and rituals. Children were taught to drum and to dance, and an effort was made to recover the old songs. They began teaching the native tongue in the local school. As one local resident said, "We had to learn how to be Indian."

The Alkali Lake Band Council believes in building individuals in order to rebuild the community. Band members are encouraged to take personal growth workshops to increase their commitment to sobriety and to learn new skills.

Building Autonomy

On the economic front, the Band now has its own enlarged logging operation and runs a greenhouse and carpentry business.

The Results

In 1972, two members of the Alkali Lake Band had stopped drinking. By 1975, 40% of the Band was sober, and 60% had stopped drinking by 1979. In 1985, 95% of the Band had achieved sobriety.

The Band is now a symbol of positive change for native people. Band members have held workshops and a large conference to communicate their success.

Band members acknowledge that building on their achievements is an ongoing challenge. Sobriety must be maintained at all times and members must be constantly vigilant about practicing the communication and other skills they have learned that support sobriety. Building on the strengths of native culture, they are also building economic autonomy and a future for their community.

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CORPORATE POLICIES

When we think of healthy public policy, we are most likely to think about what government can do. However, corporations such as the VanCity Savings Credit Union and Air Canada also create healthy policies, which serve as models for both other business organizations and for the public sector as well.

VanCity Savings Credit Union
BANKING ON SOCIAL VALUE

The Issue: A Progressive Corporation

Vancouver City Savings Credit Union is a bank with a difference. The largest credit union in the country, its elected board of members is committed to a range of progressive policies. What those policies mean in practical terms is that "the bottom line" is no longer concerned solely with profit. VanCity looks for ways of incorporating social, cultural and ecological values into business practice. In this way the real costs of doing business are not passed on to the public, to customers, or to the environment.

The Policies:

Equality For Women

Most women say they face discrimination when they want to borrow money. In order to keep alert about possible discrimination, if a woman fails to get a loan at VanCity, it is brought to a Vice President's attention.

Housing

Upstairs from the Hastings and Kamloops Branch are 34 rental suites that provide affordable housing to single parents, seniors, and people with disabilities. This small community enjoys a roof-deck playground and is handy to public transit. Plans are under way in New Westminster to establish a project that provides seniors with outreach services from a hospital next door.

VanCity Community Foundation

The VanCity Community Foundation supports community projects. For example, Foundation funds and a marketing plan have helped the Picasso Cafe boost its evening business. Staffed by street kids, this college-accredited training restaurant equips them with the skills and self-esteem to make it back into the mainstream.

The Environment

VanCity has completed a company-wide environmental audit of everything from coffee mugs to commercial loans. A major study looking at the bank's use of paper is now under way. This is important because VanCity uses large amounts of paper.

VanCity also has a program that makes donations to community environment projects every time customers use their VanCity credit card.

VanCity Staff

Over 80% of VanCity staff are women, a percentage similar to most banking institutions, but VanCity has a strong affirmative action program designed to make that ratio constant throughout the organization. Currently, women make up 55% of branch management. Linda Crompton, Vice-President of Human Resources and Environment is a firm believer in affirmative action. "Quotas are needed to force change, because we are pushing against the status quo that encourages men over women."

Recently the bank purchased no-rad screens for all its video display terminals. Recognizing that there are no long-term studies on the potential negative effects of video screens, the company adopted a cautious approach and opted to take no risks with employees' health.

The Results

VanCity is now a $2 billion corporation and enjoys a Triple A rating on bond issues. Financial success is a priority, but healthy and community-based policies exemplify VanCity's commitment to its members and to the community of which it is a part.

For More Information

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Vancouver, B.C.
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Telephone: (604) 877-7000

Non-smoking regulations on airplanes

SMOKE-FREE FLYING

The Issue

Airplane passengers were concerned about pervasive cigarette smoke in the small and confined cabins of airplanes.

The First Smoke-Free Trial

Air Canada had taken a lead in providing non-smoking alternatives in its planes. The corporation first offered passengers the choice of smoking or non-smoking seats on its 747's in 1971.

In 1986, the company introduced a smoke-free trial on half its Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal flights over a three-month period. The trial was successful. Half of the Rapidair flights became permanently smoke-free. Then, in 1988, Air Canada banned smoking on all its flights within North America.

A National Ban

In 1990, the federal government joined the airlines in their anti-smoking policy. The Non-Smokers Health Act prohibited smoking on national flights under six hours duration. Smoking is being phased out on international flights until a complete ban takes place in 1993. Air Canada declared all its flights smoke-free in October 1990--three years ahead of the legislative requirement.

Many Smokers Agree

Air Canada tested its smoke-free policies through surveys and focus groups. Passenger feedback played an important role in the decisions to expand the non-smoking policy.

The Results: A Gain In Customers

Air Canada expects to lose some passengers because of the strict non-smoking rule, but expects to gain more. A recent survey of transatlantic passengers indicates that the policy has attracted new customers while a small percentage of previous customers has switched to other airlines.

Air Canada reports high levels of customer and staff satisfaction with the smoke-free policy. The corporation has also discovered that the policy is saving money because it reduces the time and the cost of cabin cleaning and maintenance. Air Canada has found that a healthy policy is good business practice.

For More Information:

Air Canada
Place Air Canada
Montreal, Quebec
H2Z 1X4.

Telephone: (514) 879-7773

Child Safety
MAKING A NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFE FOR KIDS

The Issue

Mount Pleasant is an old Vancouver neighbourhood with a mix of industrial and residential buildings and a population made up of many cultures. Many homeless and transient people live in the area. Children lack places to go where they can feel safe.

The Policy

The Mount Pleasant Healthy Community Committee has made a commitment to make the neighbourhood safer for children.

Background

Using funds from Alcohol and Drug Programs, the Committee carried out a survey of children in three inner city schools. What they found was that 50% of the children felt that their neighbourhood was unsafe. The problem is particularly acute for ten- to twelve-year-olds.

Barriers

Mount Pleasant citizens must deal with two main challenges in order to solve the problem of neighbourhood safety. First, the political structure of the Vancouver City Council makes it difficult for particular neighbourhoods to have a voice on Council. Second, traditional programs such as Block Parent, where particular houses are designated as safe for children to go to for help, do not work in Mount Pleasant. Transience is so high that police cannot ensure that a house is a safe place for any length of time.

Community Solutions

Paul Bukode, the committee member from the Business Association of Mount Pleasant, came forward with one solution. Using a program model called Safe Place, he has worked to open a "safe place" in the Kingsgate Mall. Located near a kiosk, the safe place has been set up on a six-month trial, with plans to introduce another at a neighbourhood hotel. The Committee would also like to see the entrance to the mall's liquor store moved outside. That would lessen contact between children and customers of the liquor store.

The Healthy Community Committee is also planning programs for after school, both in the school and in the library because many children say they are alone after school, and that being alone is scary. Recognizing the enormity of safety issues for urban children, the Mount Pleasant Healthy Community Committee intends to make child safety a long-term priority.

For More Information:

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CONCLUSION

These examples have shown that healthy public policy can be created by all levels of government as well as by the private sector. The public has come to appreciate the value of healthy policies and to expect policies that support health rather than damage it.

It is often at the local level that the most far-reaching changes can take place. As these examples demonstrate, creating policies that support health do not necessarily require enormous changes to existing practices. Further examples on how B.C. communities have been involved in creating healthy public policy are in **A Guide For Communities To Enact Health-Promoting Policies**, available from the Office of Health Promotion, B.C. Ministry of Health.

Communities can work together to change policies for the better. Building healthy policy is making a commitment to good ideas and to building a healthy future.